

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 EB-11 FEAE-00 SAJ-01 INT-08 DLOS-07 DRC-01

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R 051547Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9400

INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 2102

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ENRG, DA, FO

SUBJECT: FAEROESE DEVELOPMENTS - ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AND OIL  
CONCESSIONS EXPECTED TO AID SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

REF: COPENHAGEN 2081

SUMMARY. EMBASSY OFFICER CALLED ON RUTH CHRISTENSEN,  
OFFICE DIRECTOR IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, FOR UP-DATE  
ON CURRENT FAEROESE DEVELOPMENTS, ESPECIALLY THE  
NOVEMBER LAGTING ELECTION CAMPAIGN. CHRISTENSEN STATED  
THAT, IN ADDITION TO EC ACTION ON FAEROES (SEE  
REFTEL), RECENT ATTACK BY GUNMAN ON PRIMIN ATLI DAM AND  
FAEROESE GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENT TO  
ISSUE OIL EXPLORATION CONCESSIONS WOULD ASSIST  
ELECTION PROSPECTS OF PRESENT SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC-LED  
COALITION GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

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1. FAEROESE LAGMAEND (PRIME MINISTER) ATLI DAM

SUFFERED SUPERFICIAL GUNSHOT WOUNDS IN BOTH LEGS JULY 30, WHEN A FORMER MENTAL HOSPITAL PATIENT ARMED WITH A SHOTGUN BROKE INTO THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOME AND THREATENED TO KILL HIM. THE TWENTY-NINE YEAR OLD ASSAILANT WAS DISARMED BY THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE SUBSEQUENT SCUFFLE AND ARRESTED SHORTLY AFTERWARDS BY POLICE. HE WAS COMMITTED FOR PSYCHIATRIC INVESTIGATION AFTER IT WAS REVEALED THAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN HOSPITALIZED IN CONNECTION WITH A SIMILAR THREAT ON THE LIFE OF ANOTHER FAEROESE CITIZEN. THE PRIME MINISTER IS REPORTEDLY IN GOOD CONDITION IN THE HOSPITAL IN TORSHAVN.

2. THE 42-YEAR OLD SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PRIME MINISTER IS DIRECTOR OF HIS PARTY'S CAMPAIGN IN THE NOVEMBER LAGTING ELECTION. ALTHOUGH THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT APPEARS NOT TO HAVE BEEN POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, IT IS EXPECTED TO ENHANCE THE PARTY'S ELECTION PROSPECTS.

3. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT'S PRINCIPAL ADVERSARY IN THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION IS THE LEFTIST REPUBLICAN PARTY, LED BY ERLENDUR PATURSSON. ANTI-EC, ANTI-NATO AND OPPOSED TO CONTINUED DANISH RULE, THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IS AN AMALGAM OF COMMUNIST FISHERMEN AND OLD-LINE FAEROESE NATIONALISTS. THAT ITS INFLUENCE IS GROWING, HOWEVER, WAS ILLUSTRATED BY THE ELECTION IN 1973 OF PATURSSON TO ONE OF THE TWO FAEROESE SEATS IN THE DANISH PARLIAMENT. THE OTHER SEAT HAS LONG BEEN HELD BY A SOCIAL DEMOCRAT, JOHAN NIELSEN. THE ELECTION, CONSEQUENTLY, IS SHAPING UP AS A POPULAR REFERENDUM BETWEEN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS' POLICY OF GRADUALLY INCREASED HOME RULE AND THE MORE RADICAL "EARLY INDEPENDENCE" LINE OF THE REPUBLICANS.

4. THE WEAKNESS OF THE REPUBLICAN POLICY, OF COURSE, IS THE FAEROES' CONTINUED DEPENDENCE UPON DANISH SUBSIDIES, IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY OTHER SOURCE OF INCOME OTHER THAN THAT FROM ITS FISHING INDUSTRY. DENMARK'S ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION IS APPROXIMATELY 100 MILLION KRONER (17 MILLION DOLLARS), OR ABOUT ONE-EIGHTH OF THE

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FAEROESE GNP. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE PROSPECT OF OBTAINING A SHARE IN THE PRESENT NORTH SEA OIL BONANZA IS BEGINNING TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. IN MID-JULY PRIME MINISTER DAM ANNOUNCED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD ISSUE PRELIMINARY EXPLORATION CONCESSIONS TO SOME TEN INTERNATIONAL OIL COMPANIES TO INVESTIGATE THE FAEROESE CONTINENTAL SHELF. THE CONCESSIONS WOULD NOT CONVEY THE RIGHT TO DRILL OR

EXPLOIT EVENTUAL DISCOVERIES, DAM ANNOUNCED.

5. THIS ANNOUNCED ACTION IS CONTRARY TO THE 1948 HOME RULE ACT, WHICH RESERVES CONTROL OF MINERAL RIGHTS TO THE DANISH GOVERNMENT, ACCORDING TO RUTH CHRISTENSEN IN DANISH PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE. THE FAEROESE GOVERNMENT CAN ONLY RECOMMEND ISSUANCE OF SUCH CONCESSIONS UNDER PRESENT DIVISION OF POWERS, OR, ALTERNATIVELY, IT CAN REQUEST NEGOTIATIONS WITH DENMARK LOOKING TOWARD ASSUMPTION BY THE FAEROESE OF CONTROL OF THEIR MINERAL RIGHTS. THE LATTER COURSE OF ACTION IS ANTICIPATED, WITH NEGOTIATIONS FORMALLY REQUESTED LATER THIS FALL. ALTHOUGH THE DANISH GOVERNMENT, CHRISTENSEN IMPLIED, WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT AGREE IN THE END TO TRANSFER THESE RIGHT TO THE FAEROESE, IT WAS WILLING TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION. THIS WOULD GIVE DAM'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATS OPPORTUNITY TO PREEMPT THE ISSUE DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, ARGUING THAT THEY WERE MAKING PROGRESS IN OBTAINING GREATER FAEROESE HOME RULE IN A CRUCIAL AREA.  
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